DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 157 225 EC 110 782

AUTHOR Goldstein, Marjorie T.
TITLE Field Test Advisor Perceptions of Center Operations: An Occassional Paper.
INSTITUTION Yeshiva Univ., New York, N.Y. Curriculum Research and Development Center in Mental Retardation.
SPONS AGENCY Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Sep 75
NOTE 19p.; For related information, see EC 110 779-781

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum; Elementary Secondary Education; *Mentally Handicapped; *Program Administration; *Program Evaluation; Socialization; Special Programs; Surveys

ABSTRACT

A 1974 survey was undertaken to determine the extent to which the Curriculum Research and Development Center in Mental Retardation was responsive to the needs of the Social Learning Curriculum field test advisors (FTA's). Thirty-eight FTA's responded. Among the results was a significant positive change in FTA's perceptions of Center functioning. (Copies of the survey questionnaires are appended). (DLS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED157225

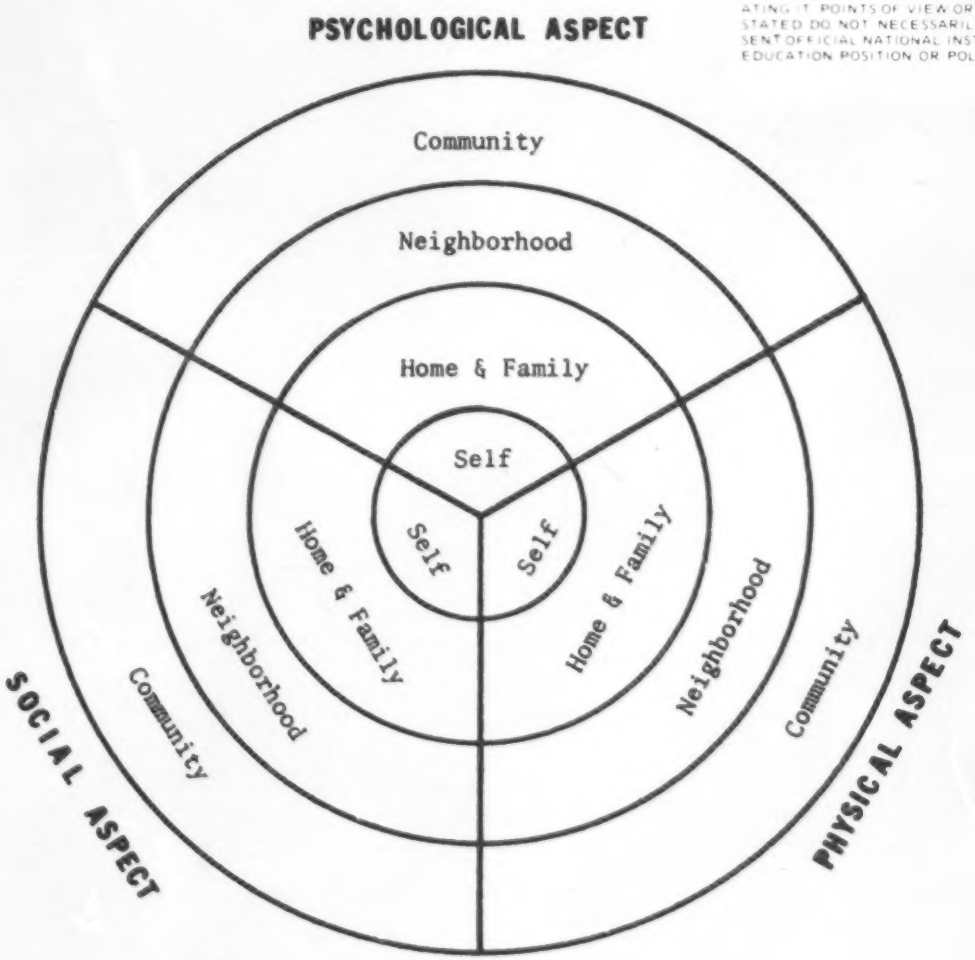
An Occasional Paper

FIELD TEST ADVISOR PERCEPTIONS OF CENTER OPERATIONS

Marjorie T. Goldstein

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY



Social Learning Curriculum

Curriculum Research and Development Center
in Mental Retardation
Herbert Goldstein, Director

Ferkauf Graduate School
Yeshiva University, New York, N. Y.

SEPTEMBER 1975

EC110782

CURRICULUM CENTER STAFF

Director	Dr. Herbert Goldstein
Development Unit	Sarah Oelberg - Development Coordinator Karen Kass - Associate Development Coordinator Mark Alter - Senior Development Program Specialist (Dev.III) Nancy Sforza - Senior Program Specialist (Dev. III) Walter Barnes - Development Project Specialist (Dev. II) Nancy Chaikin - Development Program Specialist (Dev. I) Vicki Maddison - Development Program Specialist (Dev. III) Kathy Migdal - Development Project Specialist (Dev. I) Kenneth Trank - Development Project Specialist (Dev. I)
Research and Evaluation Unit	Dr. I. Leon Smith - Coordinator of Research & Evaluation Dr. Joyce Warshaw - Associate Evaluation Coordinator Dr. Steven Singer - Senior Research Specialist Sandra Greenberg - Evaluation Specialist Raymond Bepko - Senior Evaluation Specialist Gregory Schimoler - Computer Specialist Alan Lebovitz - Research Assistant (half-time) Gary Mandell - Research Assistant (3/4 time)
Field Operations Unit	Marjorie Goldstein - Coordinator of Field Operations Margaret MacClymont - Research Assistant (5/8 time)
Media Unit	David Bocher - Media Coordinator Jeffrey Telles - Audiovisual Specialist
Production	Caroline Cordts - Production Coordinator
Administration Staff	Barbara A. Crisafulli - Office Supervisor Rose Friedman - Secretary Alice Hall - Secretary Rochelle Mohr - Secretary Dorothea Reeves - Bookkeeper Seu Wu - Secretary

Curriculum Research and Development Center in Mental Retardation
Department of Special Education
Ferkauf Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Yeshiva University
55 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10003

The Curriculum Research and Development Center is supported by the U.S. Office of Education, Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped (HEW) Project No. 443AH50027.

(c) Copyright - 1969 - Curriculum Research and Development Center in Mental Retardation, Yeshiva University, New York.

FIELD TEST ADVISOR PERCEPTIONS OF CENTER OPERATIONS*

INTRODUCTION

The Curriculum Research and Development Center in Mental Retardation, through the combined effort of curriculum development, field testing, evaluation and research is developing an educational program in social learning for mentally retarded individuals. The essentials of this process may be viewed as (1) research and development; (2) evaluation through field testing; and (3) revision of content. Once revised, the Social Learning Curriculum is marketed for general distribution through a commercial publisher.

The Curriculum Center began its operation in 1966. In the fall of 1968 field testing of the first Social Learning Curriculum materials was initiated. During that first year, more than four hundred special education teachers participated in evaluating the curriculum materials. Teachers responded to broad questions regarding the content, organization, relevance, and format of the curriculum materials that they received. Approximately three-quarters of the participating teachers used the materials independent of any local support from administrators or supervisors. In addition, there was rarely colleagial support available in the form of two or more teachers field testing together. Further, there was no individual at the Curriculum Center responsible for full-time coordination of field test activities.

Analysis of the first year's field test efforts revealed several problems. These problems, once identified, had a direct bearing on the organization and management of subsequent field testing. They were extreme variability in the quality of teachers' field test performance; in local leadership interest and

---

*The author acknowledges with gratitude the invaluable assistance provided by Ms. Peggy MacClymont during the preparation of this article.

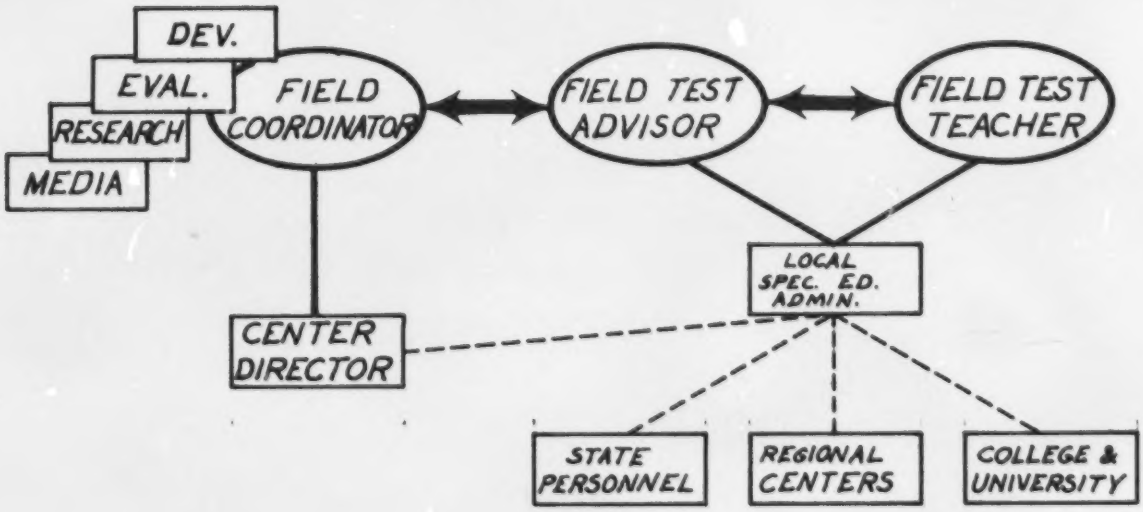
commitment; in teacher commitment and self-motivation; and in the lack of Center-based coordination of field test efforts. The problems were, of course, closely related.

At the conclusion of the first year of field testing, it became clear that local special education leadership personnel were a necessary part of the field test process, and specifically those individuals who linked special education administrators with special education teachers: the special education supervisor.

In 1969, as a field test model[1] began to emerge, the special education supervisor's role was seen as pivotal. This individual attempts to implement the educational philosophy of the administration through improving teacher performance in the classroom, thus effecting student growth. The supervisor is the professional with responsibility for providing both direct classroom support to the teacher and in-service training as well. With this in mind, the field test network communication system (Figure 1) was organized.

Figure 1

Field Test Network Communication Channels



[1]For an extensive discussion of the field test model, from its inception to the present, see "A Field Test Perspective," by Marjorie T. Goldstein, Yeshiva University: Curriculum Research and Development Center, in preparation.

The field test advisor (FTA) is the local supervisor who links the activities of his cluster of teachers to the total field test operation. His role is designed to overlap as much as possible with roles already assumed by a special education supervisor. The FTA serves as the primary communications link for reporting ongoing activities of his cluster to the Center. His major responsibility, however, is to provide substantive assistance to teachers in his cluster to improve their classroom application and evaluation of Social Learning Curriculum materials. While the focus of field testing is teacher input through evaluation, quality is often determined by the accuracy with which the field test advisor comprehends and communicates the intent of the Social Learning Curriculum to his teachers.

Other activities assumed by the field test advisor include distributing and collecting materials provided by the Center; recruiting teachers and replacing those who withdraw from the field test program; and maintaining records that serve as the basis for reporting local staff changes to the Curriculum Center.

In summary, the field test advisor is essential for effective field operations: he has responsibilities to maintain local activity at a high level of quality and efficiency and to link local efforts to those of the larger network.

PURPOSE

As an outgrowth of the Center's commitment to assist field test advisors to facilitate field test efforts at the local level, a survey was conducted in March 1974 to determine the extent to which the Curriculum Center was responsive to the needs of the field test advisor. A further purpose of the survey was to elicit FTA needs so that priorities for the Center's field operations

unit might be determined in accord with these needs to assure productive and durable Center-field relationships.

METHOD

A questionnaire was developed, based on material adapted from Likert.[2] A copy of the adapted questionnaire is attached (see Appendix 1).

The questionnaire consisted of ten questions, four of which contained one or more sub-parts: a total of fifteen separate questions. Three questions related to personal relationships between the Center staff and the field test advisor, seven to administrative issues, and five to substantive professional interactions. The questions were assigned to categories by three independent judges.

Respondents were asked (1) to recall how they perceived their relationship with the Center at the time that field testing was initiated with their cluster and (2) to assess their current relationship with the Center. For each question, they were asked to rank the degree of Center responsiveness, using a scale from "1" (unresponsive) to "5" (very responsive). From this information, the Center could determine the degree and direction of change in each of the three categories listed above, as perceived by the respondents.

The survey was mailed to the fifty-two field test advisors who were then participating in the program. Returns were received from thirty-eight FTA's, 73% of the group.

Description of Respondents

Since response to the questionnaire was anonymous, it is impossible to provide characteristics of the specific respondent group. However, the Center

---

[2] Likert, Rensis, The Human Organization. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967, 48-49.

does collect information on each field test advisor using a Field Test Advisor Data Form (see Appendix 2). Table 1 provides descriptive information about the sex, age, education, and professional responsibilities of the total field test advisor sample, based on fifty-one responses to the Field Test Advisor Data Form.

Table 1

Sex, Age, Education and Professional Responsibilities of Field Test Advisors Participating in 1973-1974 Field Test

SEX			AGE		
	Number	Percent	21-35	36-50	51& over
MALE	19	37%	37%	37%	26%
FEMALE	32	63%	28%	41%	31%
TOTAL	51	100%	32.5%	39%	28.5%

EDUCATION LEVEL		
	Number	Percent
Bachelor's	3	6%
Master's/ Post-Master's	44	86%
Ed. Specialist	3	6%
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	1	2%

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES (where all categories that applied were checked)

CATEGORY	MALE	FEMALE
Administration	84%	44%
Supervision	79%	75%
Coordination	68%	75%
Dissemination	53%	56%
Instruction	16%	25%

RESULTS

Of the thirty-eight responses to the questionnaire, eighteen provided information that could be converted to pre- and post-scores. Eighteen additional respondents provided their current perceptions of Center functioning; thus yielding a post-score only. Two field test advisors responded discursively; their answers could not be converted to scale units and, therefore, were not included in any analyses of the data.

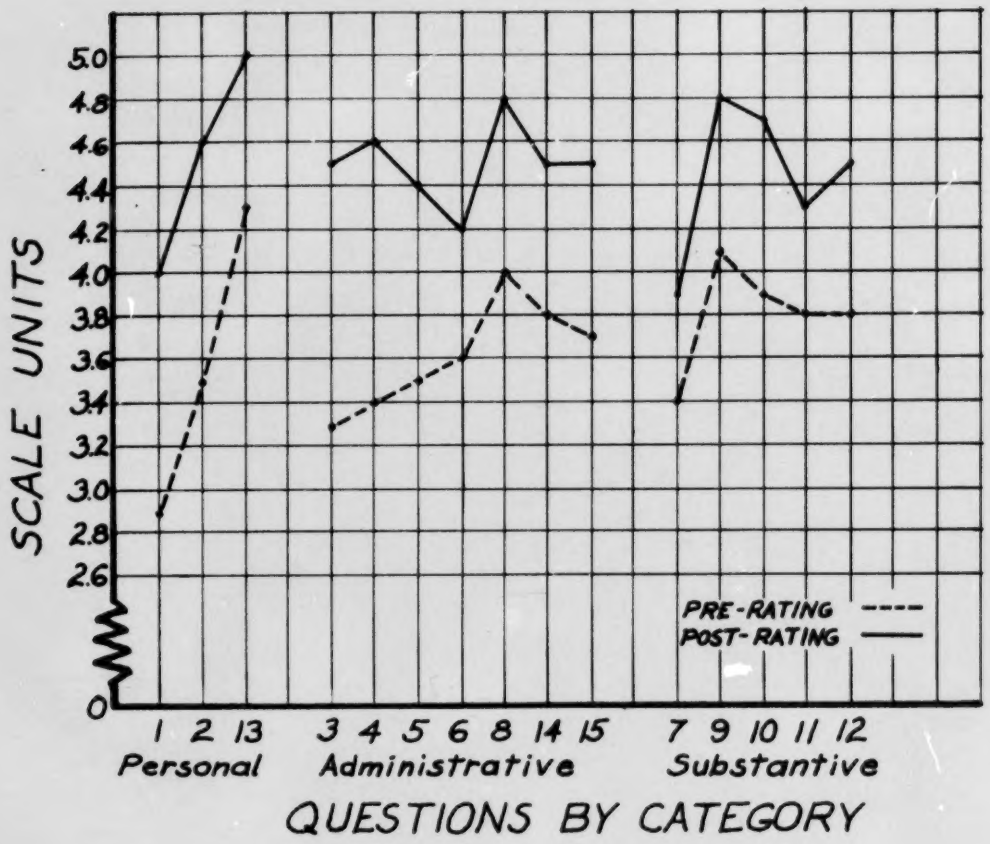
The responses of the eighteen field test advisors who provided pre- and post-ratings were analyzed using a *t*-test of repeated measures. This statistic was used to determine both the significance of change in field test advisors' perceptions of Center responsiveness for each question over time and the significance of change in individual field test advisor's perceptions from the point at which field testing was initiated to the point at which the survey was completed. Further, mean scale scores for each question and for each field test advisor were computed for the pre- and post-ratings to determine the extent and direction of change.

Question-by-Question Analysis

The survey questions were organized into three categories: personal relationships, administrative issues and substantive professional interactions. In Appendix 3 the questions are arranged by category. In the discussion that follows, responses to the questions are discussed by the category to which they were assigned rather than according to their numerical sequence on the original survey. The difference between the two scores for the same question is referred to as positive or negative change.

Figure 2

Questionnaires Yielding Both Pre- and Post-Responses
Averaged and Arranged by Category



All interpretations of Figure 2 must be qualified since post-scores specific to each question differ and, therefore, must be considered independently in relation to their own pre-score data.

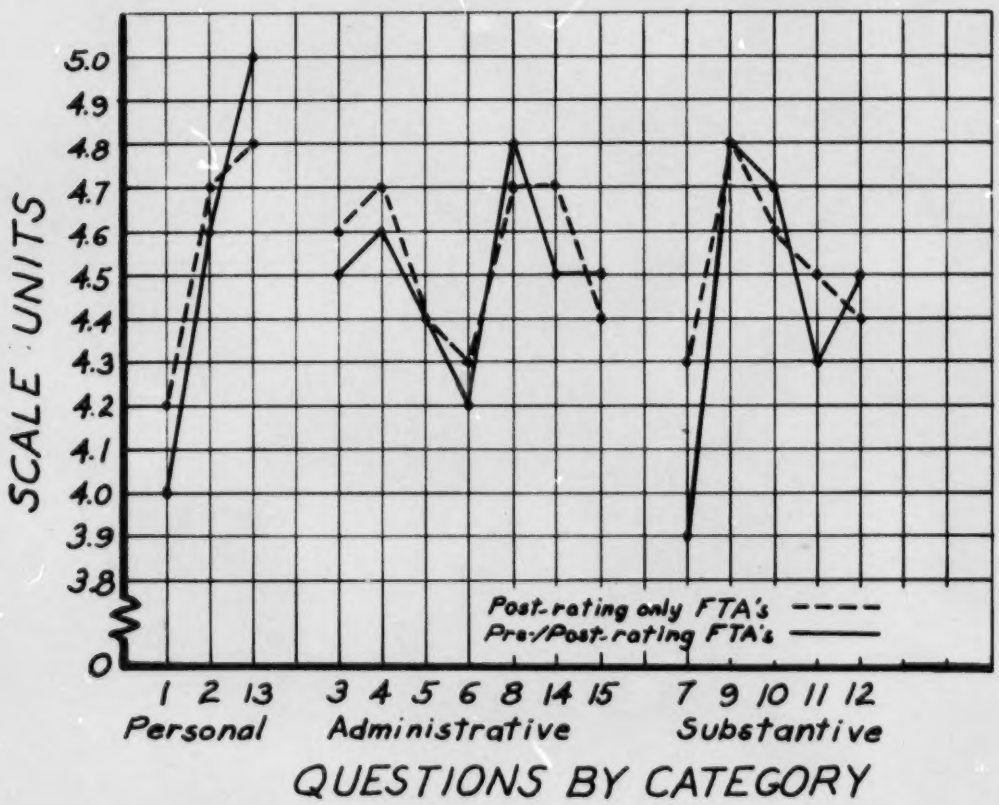
The results of the t-test show positive change for all of the questions: twelve were significant at the .01 level, two at the .05 level, and one was not significant. The latter (question 7) was in the substantive interactions category. Scale unit change from pre-score to post-score ranged from 0.5 (question 7) to 1.2 (questions 3 and 4) with the greatest change seen in questions categorized as personal relationships and administrative issues.

In Figure 2 it may be observed that systematic change occurred in all of the categories.

Positive change in the personal relationships category was from 0.7 to 1.1. This category had the highest mean change. The administrative issues category showed positive change from 0.6 (question 6) to 1.2 (questions 3 and 4), the greatest variability in change of the three categories. Questions related to substantive professional interactions showed positive change ranging from 0.5 (question 7) to 1.0 (question 10). Least change from pre- to post-ratings was found in the items dealing with substantive professional interactions.

Figure 3

Comparison of Post-Score Responses of FTA's Providing Both Pre- and Post-Ratings with FTA's Providing Post-Ratings Only



The responses of the eighteen field test advisors who provided post data only could not be analyzed using a t-test. For this group, the average score for each question was computed. In Figure 3 these data have been compared with the post-scores obtained from the first group of eighteen field test advisors. The differences between the two groups are not significant which suggests that at the time that the survey was conducted both groups of field test advisors viewed the Center similarly.

FTA by FTA Analysis

In order to get a sense of the change of each field test advisor's perceptions of the Center, the total pre- and post-ratings of each field test advisor were averaged. These data are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Mean Pre-Score and Mean Post-Score
for Eighteen Field Test Advisors

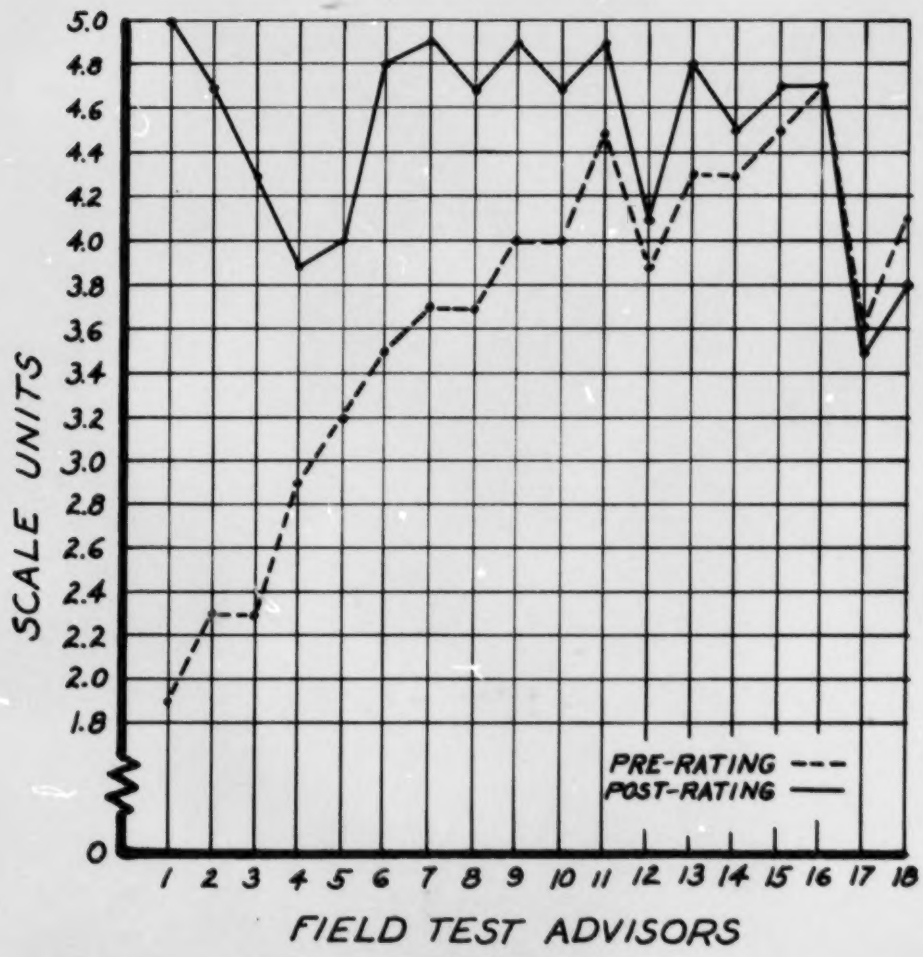


Figure 4 shows great variability of response from field test advisor to field test advisor. The amount of change from pre- to post-ratings ranges from -0.3 (FTA #18) to +3.1 (FTA #1) scale units. The range of pre-scores, 1.9 to 4.7 is greater than the range of post-scores, 3.5 to 5.0.

Using the t-test to compare the significance of change from pre- to post-ratings for the eighteen field test advisors, eleven showed a positive change in perception that was significant beyond the .01 level. Of the remaining seven sets of ratings, five reflected either no change or a change toward positive perception that was not significant. It should be considered, however, that in four of the five instances both the pre- and post-ratings were above 4.0 leaving little room for change. The two remaining field test advisor's perceptions changed negatively although the change was not significant.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of both the question-by-question and the FTA-by-FTA analyses show a significant positive change in FTA's perceptions of Center functioning. This suggests that field test advisors feel that the Center has grown, over time, in its ability to respond effectively to their needs. Those field test advisors who provided post ratings only confirm the view that the Curriculum Center is presently responding at a generally high level in relation to their perceptions of their own needs.

The question for which the mean change score was not significant was in the substantive professional interactions area. Responses to question 7, "How much is the Center interested in training you and helping you learn

better ways of doing your work?" were not surprising in view of the nature of formalized training that has been provided in the past. It is worth noting, however, that the ratings for this question were well above average. As an outgrowth to this survey, and specifically to this question, a reexamination of field test priorities was undertaken. As a result, increased emphasis will be placed on expanding both field test advisors' knowledge about the curriculum program and skills to assist them to train their teachers in the use of the Social Learning Curriculum through implementation of regional leadership training conferences. These conferences are scheduled to be initiated during the 1975-1976 school year.

Finally, since response to the survey was anonymous, it is impossible to probe the negative responses of some of the field test advisors more deeply. Negative perceptions of field test advisors serve, however, as a continuous reminder of the need for improvement. This type of survey is useful in maintaining sensitivity to changing field needs.

REFERENCES

Goldstein, Marjorie, A Field Test Perspective. Occasional paper, Curriculum Research and Development Center in Mental Retardation, 1975.

Likert, Rensis, The Human Organization. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967.

CURRICULUM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
IN MENTAL RETARDATION

Field Test Network: FTA Perceptions

Mark with an X where you view the Center operating now in relation to your work as an FTA. Mark with an O where you viewed the Center operating at the time that field testing was initiated at your field site. The dimensions used are from unresponsive (1) to very responsive (5).

	QUESTION	1	2	3	4	5
1.	How much confidence and trust do you feel the Center has in you as a Field Test Advisor?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	How much confidence do you have in the Center?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2.	To what extent is the Center interested in helping you achieve and maintain good working relationships with your teachers?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3.	To what extent does the Center try to understand your problems and accommodate to them?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4.	To what extent is the Center interested in helping you in any difficulties you have with either teachers or administrators?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5.	How much help do you get from the Center in doing your work as an FTA?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	How much is the Center interested in training you and helping you learn better ways of doing your work?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	To what extent does the Center see that you get the supplies, equipment, etc., you need to do your job well?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6.	To what extent does the Center try to keep you informed about matters related to your role as FTA?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7.	How fully does the Center share information with you about new developments, programs, etc., that are part of its work?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8.	Does the Center ask your opinion when a problem comes up which involves your work?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	Does the Center value your ideas, seek them and attempt to use them?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9.	Are representatives of the Center friendly and easily approached?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10.	To what extent does the Center give credit and recognition for contributions and accomplishments to you as FTA?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	To what extent is recognition given your teachers?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

*Adapted from Rensis Likert's The Human Organization, 1967, pp. 48-49

To be returned to the Curriculum Center

DATE:_____ APPENDIX 2

FIELD TEST ADVISOR DATA FORM

NAME:_____ CLUSTER I.D. NUMBER: _ _ _

LOCATION:_____
City State

Directions: Circle the number(s) that reflect your response(s) within each category. If more than one response is appropriate, circle all that apply.

PROFESSIONAL TITLE

1. Director of Special Education
2. Coordinator of Special Education
3. Coordinator of EMR or TMR Program
4. Consultant in Special Education
5. Curriculum Coordinator
6. Supervisor
7. Principal
8. Resource Teacher
9. Other:_____

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

10. Administration
11. Supervision
12. Program Coordination
13. In-Service Training
14. Curriculum Consultation

HIGHEST LEVEL OF TRAINING

15. Bachelor's Degree
16. Master's Degree
17. Post Master's study
18. Ed. Specialist's Degree
19. Doctoral Degree
20. Post Doctoral study

YEAR HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED

21. Prior to 1946
22. 1946 - 1955
23. 1956 - 1965
24. 1966 - 1970
25. After 1970

AGE

26. 21 - 30
27. 31 - 40
28. 41 - 50
29. 51 and above

SEX

30. Male
31. Female

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

32. Teacher - EMR
33. Teacher - TMR
34. Teacher - other special ed. area
35. Teacher - general education
36. Resource Teacher
37. Master Teacher

38. Special Education Supervisor
39. Elementary Education Supervisor
40 School Psychologist
41. Guidance Counselor
42. Curriculum Coordinator
43. Principal

44. Director of Special Education
45. General Education Administrator
46. Superintendent of Schools
    a. Public
    b. Institution
    c. Private
47. State Consultant
48. College/University Professor

49. Sheltered Workshop experience
50. State Institution experience
51. Private Institution experience
52. Private School experience

53. Other:_____

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS

54. Council for Exceptional Children
55. American Assn. on Mental Deficiency
56. National Education Association
57. CASE
58. CEC - MR
59. ACLD
60. Other:_____

_____

_____

_____

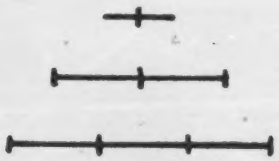
Please respond to each question below in terms of your present job setting.

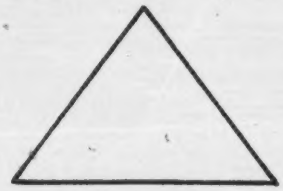
1. Briefly describe your role and responsibilities.

2. What factors make your job situation unique? *(What should the Center know about your local work, so that excessive demands are not made on YOU?)*

3. Briefly outline your philosophy of supervision and discuss the extent to which you have been able to implement it in your present position.

4. Below are two alternative representations of organizational structure, in terms of decision making and communications flow. Space is provided if neither of these reflects your organizational pattern, so that you may draw your own. Within this framework, on any of the schematics, place yourself (X); your immediate supervisor (O); and the Director of Special Education (*). Discuss the schematic as it reflects your decision-making responsibility within your organization.





CURRICULUM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
IN MENTAL RETARDATION

Field Test Network: FTA Perceptions

Mark with an X where you view the Center operating now in relation to your work as an FTA. Mark with an O where you viewed the Center operating at the time that field testing was initiated at your field site. The dimensions used are from unresponsive (1) to very responsive (5).

QUESTIONS BY CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	5
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS					
1. How much confidence and trust do you feel the Center has in you as a Field Test Advisor?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. How much confidence do you have in the Center?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. Are representatives of the Center friendly and easily approached?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES					
3. To what extent is the Center interested in helping you achieve and maintain good working relationships with your teachers?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. To what extent does the Center try to understand your problems and accommodate to them?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. To what extent is the Center interested in helping you in any difficulties you have with either teachers or administrators?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. How much help do you get from the Center in doing your work as an FTA?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. To what extent does the Center see that you get the supplies, equipment, etc., you need to do your job well?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
14. To what extent does the Center give credit and recognition for contributions and accomplishments to you as FTA?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
15. To what extent is recognition given your teachers?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SUBSTANTIVE PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS					
7. How much is the Center interested in training you and helping you learn better ways of doing your work?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. To what extent does the Center try to keep you informed about matters related to your role as FTA?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. How fully does the Center share information with you about new developments, programs, etc., that are part of its work?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. Does the Center ask your opinion when a problem comes up which involves your work?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12. Does the Center value your ideas, seek them and attempt to use them?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]